

Today, the House recognizes that 37 million people living in poverty is not acceptable. And this should mark a new beginning.

Toward concerning all—because a loving nation looks out for the health and wellness of all its people.

Today's a step towards a livable wage—not just a minimum wage.

Toward economic justice.

#### PASS FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT

(Mr. LOEBACK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LOEBACK. Mr. Speaker, the Fair Minimum Wage Act is aptly named because this legislation is about fairness, about shrinking the ever-widening gap between those who can afford to live in our society and those who struggle every day to make ends meet.

My constituents in Iowa and people across America are working harder, but they are not receiving the fruits of their labor, and many face daily financial hardships.

I am very concerned that while Congress has failed to raise the minimum wage for the past 10 years, the salaries of the Members of this body have risen dramatically. For the past 10 years, the minimum wage remains stagnant at \$5.15 an hour, but annual congressional salaries rose by more than three times what a minimum wage earner makes in a year.

I call on all of my colleagues today to promptly increase the minimum wage and show America that we are about fairness, about rewarding those who work hard day in and day out.

#### MINIMUM WAGE IS ARBITRARY NUMBER

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, despite vastly overwhelming numbers, I rise to address the House, and I apparently represent the entire body on this side of the aisle.

I want to say this to my Democrat friends, and I understand the vote here and I understand the politics of minimum wage, but why \$7.50 an hour, \$7.15, whatever it is? Why not \$8? Why not \$9? It is an arbitrary number anyhow. Maybe \$15, maybe \$20 an hour. It is an arbitrary number. If we are command and control, central government planning anyhow, why is \$7 an hour sufficient?

In 1980, 15 percent of the workers in America were on minimum wage. Today, it is 2.5 percent. Who are they? Fifty-two percent are teenagers. Thirty percent are part-timers. And 40 percent have never held a job before.

Many studies show that when the minimum wage increases, small businesses who will be most affected actually decrease the number of jobs, thus hurting those whom we are supposed to be helping.

I would say to you that the reason most jobs do not pay minimum wage anymore is because the economy has moved the central government planning of Congress and the thinking of 1938 which set the law in motion to begin with. With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the debate today.

#### PASS MINIMUM WAGE ACT

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2, the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007, and I am glad it will pass today in the House of Representatives, because for too long the disparity between the wealthiest and the poor has been going on and continuing to grow in America. And it is in no small part due to the Republicans not raising the minimum wage in almost 10 years.

Imagine this, you work for \$5.15 an hour. You work all year round, and not your take-home pay but your gross pay is \$10,700. That is \$6,000 below the poverty level for a family of three every year.

The minimum wage has not gone up. Real income, the buying power of the dollar has gone down for Americans. And the cost of health insurance, of gasoline, of home heating, of tuition at college has gone up by \$5,000 since the year 2000. So this is an important law to pass today.

#### SUPPORTING MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that my first public words on this sacred floor address an issue of utmost importance to the citizens of this great Nation.

Today, we will be considering H.R. 2, the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007, to give 13 million Americans a pay raise. This is legislation which I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of.

Increasing the minimum wage is necessary. It is a necessary step to help 38 million Americans living in poverty. Yet the Congress for almost 10 years has failed to assist this population by increasing the minimum wage to a decent wage. An increase in the minimum wage would help nearly 700,000 Georgia workers.

As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, the majority leadership of the 109th Congress felt it necessary to award themselves a pay raise despite the fact that they worked just over 100 days in 2006. Given that more than half of Americans will benefit from this wage increase, I am looking forward to Americans getting a fair wage today and have this bill pass.

Given that more than half of Americans who will benefit from this wage increase work a full

week every week, it is time for this Congress to increase the minimum wage and give America's hardest workers a fair wage for a fair day's work.

□ 1030

#### FAUX KLINGONS SENDING REAL AMERICANS TO WAR

(Mr. WU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago, this administration took America to war in Iraq without adequate evidence. Since that time, the administration has not listened to the American people, it hasn't listened to our professional military, and it certainly hasn't listened to this Congress.

It was said of a prominent businessman in downtown Portland that he never listened to anybody and that if he was ever drawn in a cartoon he would be drawn without ears.

Now, this President has listened to some people, the so-called Vulcans in the White House, the ideologues. But unlike the Vulcans of Star Trek, who made the decisions based on logic and fact, these guys make it on ideology. These aren't Vulcans. There are Klingons in the White House. But unlike the real Klingons of Star Trek, these Klingons have never fought a battle of their own.

Don't let faux Klingons send real Americans to war. It is wrong.

#### ANSWERING THE CHALLENGE TO THE ESCALATION OF THE WAR IN IRAQ

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate an historic event that occurred in this Chamber 91 years ago during the middle of the Great War, the war to end all wars.

On January 10, 1918, this House passed a constitutional amendment granting women the right to vote by a vote of 274 to 136. Representative Jeanette Rankin from Montana, the first woman to serve in this body, whose statue appears in Statuary Hall and who became the first woman to serve in Congress in 1917, asked her male colleagues this important question in asking them to support that amendment: "How shall we answer the challenge, gentlemen?"

Her question is worth repeating today as President Bush prepares to escalate the war in Iraq. We need to repeat her question: How shall we answer this challenge?

#### SUPPORT THE STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT

(Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, today, we will have the